

ILLUSIONS

REFERENCE

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2002

Pride Centre of Edmonton
9540 - 111 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5G 0A5

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FOR EDMONTON'S CROSSDRESSERS AND THOSE WHO ADMIRE THEM

EDITORIAL

Hello all and welcome to this issue! With Winterfest hot on its way, and oodles of events studding the local scene, life has definitely not been boring. The bars welcome the Messy Messy Crossdressers, the shops love us, and response to the newsletter has been positive. Even our Treasurer thinks it's a good idea!

The article on Illusions in the January 10th issue of SEE Mag was well-done and well-received by all. Illusions membership was highly amused, local bar denizens were getting covergirl autographs, and the Internet crossdressing community got a look, and their two cents worth in. (More next page, keep reading!)

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PVC, sequins and lace), and once done, retired to the Roost for chat and some serious techno dance. Due to seriously frigid weather, the turnout on the previous Tuesday's meet&greet was low, and Drag Time ruled the show.

Our club member Elise competed in last month's Ms. Drag Edmonton finals at Boots, looked great and did well, even if some fabulous babe broke her heart and stole the title. The Illusions girls showed up in force (and slutty

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The two old girls on the right recently attended a makeover course offered at Esst-Elle Academy, and came away with a wealth of information, and a goodly bundle of new cosmetics. Titled "Facelift", the course was taught by Julie Heuman, a video and cinema makeup tech, and was directed towards older girls. If you want a good idea of today's styles, these courses can only help. They're available through Metro Community College (428-1111), or browse to <http://www.metrocommunitycollege.ca>.

Your editor and her SO spun down to the Calgary chapter for their Valentine's social, and a good evening ensued. No Edmonton-Calgary rivalry here; the girls were totally friendly and looked marvelous. We can expect to see a few of our sisters here on the 23rd!

No crossdresser's publication would be complete without the obligatory gentle rant towards those of us who simply

Don't Get Out Enough. There are many valid reasons for staying in the closet; this issue we've included a good talk from someone there. This doesn't change our own editorial stance here – meetings are always a good time, there's plenty of opportunity to step out enfemme. No matter how much you think you'll be Noticed, or even worse, Pass – you'll be wrong! Most people don't pick up on what you're doing, most women who do, smile at you, and if you smile back, acting like you belong in what you're wearing, then you're a winner!

Have fun, show pride, Shae

UPCOMING EVENTS

You know already about Winterfest. If not, go to the back page and read on!

The Roost (10345-104St, Edm) is featuring a major drag event featuring a Vancouver cast, on Friday March 8. They'll be open 'till 7am. The following Thursday and Saturday will feature pageants of the local talent. <http://www.theroostniteclub.com>

Next Illusions' Social will be held Thursday, March 14th. Contact Rachael, Tuesdays, at 424-2685 for information.

Calgary's ISCCA hosts their April Coronation Ball on Saturday, April 20th. The host hotel is: Quality Hotel & Conference Centre 3828 Macleod Trail S. 1-800-361-3422 Canada/US. \$99/night ISCCA rate. E-mail diannelalaonde@yahoo.com for further info.

Illusion Calgary holds Saturday get-togethers in their club room. For info or to be put on their mailing list, contact jodeee@shaw.ca.

Esprit Gala is a major event held this May 13-19 in Port Angeles, Washington. The Northwest Gender Alliance from Portland (<http://www.nwgapdx.org>), the Emerald City Social Club of Seattle (<http://www.nwart.com/emcity>), and the Cornbury Society (<http://www.transgender.org/cornbury>) from Vancouver are sponsors. Mail inquiries to **Esprit**, Box 90816, Portland OR USA 97290, or surf to <http://www.espritlegala.com>.

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Illusions February/March 2002 - The Newsletter of the Illusions' Social Club

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LETTERS

Just downloaded your newsletter. Great!!!!!! I'm poring over it and getting tons of help. Thank God there's someone sharing all this information. Love the cover girl. Keep me in the loop.

-Carla Flame

CDA Retorts!

I liked your write up for the most part, but if you understand what I mean, it was undervalued. I don't think over 500 members is a group that just promotes a party, especially a non-porno, non-dating egroup. I think you need to look through how many resources we have. Go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cross_dressers_anonymous, then logon with your Yahoo user id and password. If you don't have one, set one up, it's free. This will allow you to see the hundreds of bookmarks for support, etc...

I felt the write up down graded us to a group of out TGs bragging about being out. Actually we help each other. Not all of us are out, and a smaller percentage is even very out. Thursday night chats are great too. I personally have helped over a hundred people come out in NC alone through CDA. We have a worldwide membership, hence, we promote and bookmark every known support resource we can find. Hopefully, these will all go to the web site.

Hugs,
Joney "JDG" <jdg1965@earthlink.net>

SEE Mag gets responses from the world online!

<http://www.greatwest.ca/see/Issues/2002/0110/in.html>

Great article, really enjoyed reading it! Thanks for helping to educate the world.

-Emily.

Shae and Elise make great cover girls, and the article is interesting and well worth reading. To my personal delight, it mentions women who dressed as men to go into battle, as well as dealing with male to female crossdressing. The one reservation I have about the article is the definitions that Edmonton psychiatrist Lorne Warneke uses to categorize crossdressers.

Re: Transgenders - I would have preferred it if they'd used the term "transsexuals" here, as "transgender" is a much broader term, and is regularly used to describe people who don't actually transition from M2F or vice versa.

Re: Transvestites - how do others here feel about this definition? Is the emphasis in Warneke's definition a little too sexually orientated, is (s)he over-generalizing a little, or does (s)he have a point? Purely speaking for myself, the female gender within me finds emotional protection, delicious irony and empowerment (amongst many other things) while en homme. The male gender within me

takes being en homme as just pretty normal, nothing earth-shattering and finds being addressed as "love" or "babe" while en homme rather incongruent. The male gender within me finds being en femme fun, a thrill, glamorous, and wonders if I might look a bit too butch for that frilly blouse, but, what the hell, frilly blouses are *pretty*! When en femme, my female side enjoys fuss, attention and compliments, but feels vulnerable to criticism about her looks and weight, and wishes she could look *better*.

-Angel Star

I know I don't fit into "Opportunistic" or "Drag Queens" categories. So that leaves "Transgenders" and "Transvestites". Do I want to become a girl? No. Do I feel that I have parts of "the opposite sex" in me? Yes. But as I don't have the gender identity of the opposite sex, I guess I am not a "Transgender" either.

I DO NOT dress for sexual pleasure. And do not perceive this as any "fetish" in any use of the word I am familiar with. So, I am not in the "Transvestite" category. So where am I? And I would feel that the majority of the ladies here are in the same boat.

My point? How did such a gender classification like this get published in a gender publication?

-Melissa

You pose a good question. Unfortunately, I don't believe it will be resolved anytime soon.

My own opinion: We who are out in front of the public, going shopping, doing chores, dining, etc. have the responsibility to present ourselves in such a way as to change the misconceptions of our little slice of society. Sooner or later someone is going to notice that there is another category, if you will.

Change takes a long time, but once it starts it's difficult to stop.

-Michelle

ARGH!! That article was doing so well until the very end: What about those of us who are NOT transgendered (i.e. don't want to physically change our sex) but dress because we like wear women's clothing for NON-SEXUAL reasons? I know the Illusions group tried to correct this misconception, but the article emphasized the sexual nature of cross-dressing over the desire for the clothes themselves. *sigh* They had to emphasize the sexual fantasy nature, didn't they? And worse, they discounted the "because I like to dress this way" attitude (which is why I dress) as being NOT the norm. I'm sorry, but Warneke had it backward, in my not so humble opinion. I think most of us dress NOT for sexual reasons but because we like the way we look when dressed. I don't find crossdressing a sexual thrill at all. That is not why I started to dress either. Maybe I'm in the minority here, but I don't think so.

-Lisa Freeborn (going to take a chill pill)

think that the problem is that we are new enough that terminology has not yet settled down. The 'transgendered' above I would call 'transsexual' - whether or not they have surgery is a personal choice. Also, I'm not really sure of the difference between Drag Queen and Opportunistic.

To me, 'transgendered' is the umbrella term that includes everybody, and is then subdivided into Drag Queen/King, Transsexual (pre-, post-, and non-op), and Cross-dresser.

I'm with you, Lisa; so near yet so very far. Also, sexual gratification is not a consideration for most of us.

-Darlene

I do not like the term 'transvestite' as it conjures up thoughts of a medical condition or disease i.e. inferring there is something wrong with the person, and I would go as far as to say that most crossdressers take similar issue with that term. Any so-called professional should know this, and by using the term 'transvestite' gives me that impression that they view themselves as being 'outside the cage and looking in'. I wonder if Wameke would call a deaf person who could not speak 'dumb' - technically correct but insensitive and inappropriate in 2002.

Whilst I acknowledge and agree that there IS a connection between crossdressing and sexual arousal, it is not the ONLY connection. Geez, what does (s)he think that we all go around with a raging hard-on all of the time we are dressed en femme? I don't think so. Many people who do not crossdress get sexual arousal from inanimate things like leather, shoes and pornography for example. Nobody seems to compartmentalize these people, but to make the sexual connection a pre-requisite to the REASON we crossdress, or even to infer it, is a load of BS.

If every second bloke (or woman) wore clothes which by today's standards appeared to be that usually worn by the opposite sex, then NOBODY (not even the psychologists)

would give a second thought to the reason we crossdress. It would be NORMAL. It all boils down to societal conditioning.

-Jane Cox

Rather than correcting the errant impression that 'transgender' is the same as 'transsexual', some of these statements reinforce it.

Transgender is the broad, inclusive term for anyone who is gender variant - that is, their internal perception of their gender is not congruent with their physical sex. That includes transsexuals as well as crossdressers. If one doesn't want to change her sex, she is not transsexual; but she definitely is transgendered.

Likewise, 'transvestite' is simply the medical/legal term for 'crossdresser' and does not necessarily imply 'fetish' unless specifically combined into a term such as 'transvestic fetishism'.

-Lacey Leigh

Wameke uses these terms because that's the only way he can get funding for SRS-related consulting from the government - this is the Official Line from the Alberta Advantage. -Shae

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DEEP IN THE CLOSET AND HAPPY THAT WAY!

The way I see it, the start of my Beautiful Obsession could be traced back to my youth. I grew up with four sisters. Seeing and touching the fine materials that their clothes were made of, seemed somehow unfair when compared with mine which were cotton or wool and usually dark colours which were of course, plain. I could not resist touching these fine fabrics; the feel of those fine soft, silky fabrics against my skin was exquisite. I found this very erotic and used to "play" with their "things" as much as I could. I never got caught, although it was close a few times. There was a certain amount of guilt attached to my actions as I somehow knew, even at the age 12 or 14, that this was a forbidden activity - getting caught would be a very shameful, embarrassing thing.

My formative years from the age of 16 to 18 were during the sixties. Being a Mod, I was allowed to at least wear bright colours and fine materials. This, I suppose, was some type of outlet for the feel of fine fabrics. But alas, it was not the same thing as the thrill of doing the forbidden.

As marriage, children and commitments took over my life my Beautiful Obsession had to take a back seat and consisted of the occasional wearing of my wife's undies and nighties. This was done in total secrecy and was of a purely sexual nature. It was fun and I enjoyed it immensely. I did try to get my wife to enjoy these pleasures with me, but to my sadness she had no interest in these things and found them to be quite perverted and

unnatural. Consequently it was kept under wraps. As time went by, I became divorced, my children were grown up and had left home. For the first time in my life I was living alone and enjoyed the freedom to follow my Beautiful Obsession. During this time I built up a fair collection of nighties, half-slips and knickers.

When I began dating again, I made my Beautiful Obsession known to any lady I took out. I took great risk in doing this, as I liked my place in the closet. In sadness I watched several ladies walk away; some thought it was weird, some thought it was sick and perverted. I was determined not to let their reaction deter me. I would not put myself in the same position as during my first marriage. I would not hide in shame in my own house. I was determined to keep looking until I found someone who could accept all of me.

Well, I did find that someone, and I married her. A more loving wife a man could not find anywhere. She accepted my Beautiful Obsession without batting an eye. This fact was brought home to me during a visit to a lingerie shop. She was completely unaware that she was discussing out loud, within earshot of everyone there; would this nightie or that nightie fit me and would I look good in this one or

that one. All this was said as though this was the most natural conversation to be having in the middle of the store. I was totally embarrassed as I caught the sideways looks given us by the lady shopping beside us. My wife promised to be more restrained when she realised what she had just said.

My wife once asked me if it was the silk or the dressing in women's underwear that is the turn on for me. I have to say it is both the women's underwear and the silk. It would have the same appeal if I were to dress in men's silk underwear. We are both comfortable with it; she buys me presents to increase my collection and we do not take it too seriously.

To the point of my rambling, I am very happy where I am, and have no wish to go to any higher level. I am content to be deep in the closet, and have no intention of ever coming out. I have no desire to walk about in public dressed in my Beautiful Obsession.

Signed,
Happy InThe Closet And Staying There.
P.S. Leave the light on.

MAKING YOUR OWN !

There are a variety of reasons why you may wish to create a breast prosthesis; you may wish to experiment cheaply with a different cup size, or you may just wish to inexpensively create a realistic breast form before embarking on an expensive breast prosthesis purchase.

The types of forms you can create using these methods can quickly create the desired figure, but they are not meant to be permanent nor are they meant to be replacements for more professionally built forms.

Alexis of California Exotic Shoes and Clothing



15125B Stony Plain Road, Edmonton
780-489-9585

Special considerations when creating your own breast form

* Breast forms are often only as good as the bra that contains them. Spending extra time getting the right bra size (as versus cup size) can pay off. See sections 13, 14 and 15 of this FAQ for information on obtaining a bra that fits well.

* Homemade breast forms often do not hold a particular shape well - their shape usually comes from the bra that contains them. A bra should be substantial and give enough coverage so that the desired contours can be created. Push up bras, see-through lace, and sheer nylon do not work very well in such situations. Underwired bras provide less movement but provide better shape.

- Breast forms usually do not lend themselves to wearing see through garments or producing décolletage.
- Clothing that covers the bra and chest area completely such as garments with high necks, longer sleeves, and sweaters can help hide many flaws in the construction of a homemade form.

* Some methods for creating homemade forms listed use liquids or gelatinous substances. The handling and maintaining of liquids has some inherent difficulties not to mention the possible danger of puncture in an awkward situation.

* The use of nylon stockings as an outer breast form surface is common in the methods listed. Nylons usually come in a wide variety of shades and finding an appropriate tint that matches your skin coloration can make the form blend in better when wearing.

* If you have purchased or constructed an unweighted form (such as a form with foam, cotton or rubber contents), extra weight can be added using drapery weights, gunshot, BB's or something similar. This can enhance the movement and draping characteristics of the form.

[NOTE: Be warned that using weighting material that contains lead is not recommended for health reasons - heavy

metals have a cumulative effect, and lead and humans generally do not get along in the long run.

Breast Form 1 - nylons and seed

Approximate Cost: \$5-\$10 per pair

Materials:

- * A properly fitting bra (see sections 18 & 19 earlier in the FAQ.)
- * 1 pair of knee high nylons, preferably in a shade that closely matches your skin coloration.
- * 1 plastic container for the seed
- * An inexpensive plastic funnel to fill the knee-high.
- * If needed, a screen or colander with small (about 1/8") holes to sift a seed mixture.
- * 1 pair scissors
- * A good quantity of small size rounded seed. These usually have about the right weight to give the form the correct movement reactions.

Materials that are good for this purpose are:

- Bird Seed (Use a bag of fine quality bird seed. If needed, a 6-inch square of 1/8 inch screen is available at hardware stores to sift the seed mixture to capture only the small round seeds.
- Millet (an edible seed available at most health food stores)
- Quinoa (another edible seed available at most health food stores)

Instructions:

1. Prepare the approximate amount of seed that will be required for each form. If you are using a mix such as birdseed, you will need to use a screen or colander to sift it in order to separate everything but the small, round seeds.
2. Insert a hand in the knee-high and stretch it out to reduce the natural stiffness of a new nylon.
3. Insert the funnel in the top of the nylon and pour in the correct amount of seed. Not enough seed in the form can make the bra wrinkle. Too much grain can make the bra form overflow and look unrealistic.
4. Twist the knee-high a couple turns, and push the "ball" you have created through again. Your form will now be 2-ply which won't open up as easily on you while wearing it. Experiment with the amount of tension you

put on the knee high when you twist it. Having it too loose or too tight is not good.

5. Now make a slip knot so that it can easily be undone if the amount of seed needs to be adjusted.

6. The nylon will adjust and stretch over a few days giving a more natural feel to the form. Because of this do not assume that the form is ready to go when created. It will feel more and more comfortable and natural as time goes on.

7. Use scissors to cut off the nylon above the knot leaving only the stretch nylon stocking with the knot. If the knot is made tight enough and the correct amount of nylon is left, a perfect "nipple" can be created.

8. Insert the form into the bra making sure that the slipknot is worn at the right place to simulate the nipple. The knot should not become undone in normal use if tied tightly enough.

9. Whether you are making only a single form or a pair of forms, make sure that balance between your left and right side is about equal and does not produce an overly lopsided appearance. Given that, note that most women's breasts are not exactly the same. One is often slightly smaller, higher or a different shape from its partner.

10. When worn, body heat will help to make the form take the shape of the bra cup. The form may be worn privately until the nylon has stretched and the content adjusts itself for a natural look.



Pros of this type of form

- * Fairly realistic - passable in low-contact situations
- * Has more realistic weight than foam and cotton forms
- * The size of the form is easily configurable if it does not fit in a bra
- * Cheap. This allows you to have several different sized forms at once.

(I bought some seed to experiment and found millet to be about \$.75/lb and Quinoa was about \$2.25/lb)

* Durable. The substances used are not volatile. Only a puncture would seriously damage it.

Cons of this type of form

- * Consistency and feel is not as realistic as silicone, latex, or rubber
- * Not waterproof
- * Some seed types (such as millet) might have a slight odor or can leave some residue on clothing.
- * Not attachable to the chest
- * No built-in nipple (but if you follow the instructions above...)
- * Although the bra gives the form its shape, minor bumps or impacts can temporarily deform the shape slightly

Breast Form 2 - Rubber fishing worms and balloons

Approximate Cost: \$10 each

Materials:

- * 1 pair of knee high nylons, preferably in a shade that closely matches your skin coloration.
- * 4 paddle balloons (~\$10) These will be about 36 inches or larger when blown up. They can often be found in flower stores where they have stuffed animals inside them. When flat they are in the shape of a circle about 10 inches in diameter. They come in a variety of colors, but a neutral color will probably work better for this purpose.
- * 200 - 4 inch rubber fishing 'wiggle worms'. You can obtain these from mail order fishing companies like Orvis, or Gander Mountain. They can also be found in bulk at some K-Mart stores (approx. cost: ~\$11)
- * 2 - 3 quart dish soap bottles such as Joy or Dawn. You can use Tupperware tops, plastic milk containers, or other plastic materials, but the plastic needs to have some firmness to it so that it does not bend too much.

Instructions:

- * Preparing the stockings and the balloons
 1. From the toe of the stockings, measure about 10 inches and cut off the end.
 2. Count out the correct number of rubber 'worms' into a container (one with a thin opening is preferable.) The quantity of rubber 'wiggle worms' described above is enough to make two sets of forms. If you place 40 of the rubber 'worms' in each balloon, you will have about a B cup. 60 should give about a firm C cup.
 3. Stretch the mouth of the balloon over the container and fill the balloon with the 'worms'.
 4. Fill the balloon with water until all of the rubber worms are covered.

5. Force the air out of the balloon and then tie the top tightly.

* Cutting the plastic

1. If you use the Joy bottle, cut out the two pear shaped indentations on each side of the bottle. Otherwise, cut a pear shape out of the plastic so that it will fit over your breast. (slant the narrow tip of the pear to the outside of each breast.)

2. Make sure the edges are not sharp. If the plastic is thick enough this should not be a problem, but we wouldn't want to puncture the water-filled balloon.

* Putting it all together

1. Insert the narrow end of the plastic into the opening of the stocking.

2. Work it all the way to the toe of the nylon stocking.

3. Pull the open end of the stocking down and over the plastic. You want the opening to be on the outside of your plastic.

4. Carefully insert the balloon. You may have to squeeze it to get it in.

5. Pull the knot on the balloon out the opening of the stocking. This will be part of the nipple for the form.

6. Wrap the open end of the stocking over and around the balloon knot and tie it off using your favorite type of knot (the original author used a 'half-hitch', but others will work just as well.)

Pros of this type of form

- * Fairly realistic - passable in low-contact situations
- * Has more realistic weight than foam and cotton forms
- * Has more realistic movement than the 'seed and nylons' method because of the liquid and the balloon on the plastic
- * The size of the form is fairly easy to change if it does not fit in a bra
- * Cheap. This allows you to have several different sized forms at once

Cons of this type of form

- * Consistency, feel and movement is not nearly as realistic as silicone
- * Vulnerable to puncture. If this happens, the water contents would leak out causing a probable distressing situation for the wearer
- * Not attachable to the chest
- * No built-in nipple (but if you follow the instructions above...)

<http://www.blooberry.com/bformfaq> Please send ideas, comments, or corrections to bformfaq@blooberry.com

THE SALON FROM HELL

My first salon visit for color, highlights, and style wasn't entirely voluntary.

It came thanks to a glance in the mirror one day, which revealed the grey patches advancing across my dark red hairline faster than Grant racing to Richmond. At my dear wife's suggestion (and forgetting that my last do-it-yourself home repair, a dripping shower faucet, resulted in sharing \$500 with a plumber, dry wall hanger, and tile installer), I took matters into my own hands and decided to address the problem with a short-term, home applied solution intended to take away "only the grey". Rather than commit to a more permanent treatment, I chose a rinse which, boasted the package instructions, would wash out within "six to eight" shampoos - just in



case I didn't like the result. The photo on the box promised a rich, dark auburn with glowing copper highlights.

But then I also believed in bug-free software, that

the check was in the mail, and "He's great with strangers and never bites."

Following the application, the expected auburn turned out to be more of a flamingo pink. No problem, just shampoo it away and start over. Unfortunately, the color survived at least a dozen energetic scrubbings under the shower head with Vidal Sassoon's best shampoo. I still looked like a shag rug following a Pepto Bismol food fight.

After making a desperate scan through the Yellow Pages, I organized an emergency appointment at a trendy salon whose advertisement boasted, "We specialize in corrective color". A 20 minute consultation with stylist and colorist led to one attendant providing me with a smock and a stack of totally vapid entertainment gossip magazines while the colorist went to "formulate" the color stuff.

I was saved from the impending intellect erosion when my assigned "shampoo specialist" led me to a reclining chair adjacent a sink for the obligatory, preparatory scrub & rub. It's not quite as comfortable a process as one might imagine. Those little U-shaped depressions in the sink wall (the ones which are designed to support the customer's neck and to prevent drips and runs down one's back) probably function quite well when the client's neck is small enough to actually fit the cutout area. In my case, even the towel wrapped around my neck failed to prevent that strange feeling between my shoulder blades when it begins to get moist back there. And warm. And warmer. And HOT! "Hey," I asked of the girl, "is heat sterilization part of the technique or are scalp blisters actually the style this season?" Apparently they don't hire shampoo attendants for their comprehension of subtle irony. Or of English, for that matter. Only when I said in my pidgin Tex-Mex, "No mas, no mas. Este mucho grande calor!" did she get the idea. At which point she cut the 'hot' flow completely and my scalp joined the Polar Bear Club. I developed instant empathy for boiled eggs.

She made amends, however, with a rinse and scalp massage which was soft, sensuous, and all too short for

my liking. It might have been longer but we were being summoned to the color application station - the ingredients had been formulated. Like an old-time pharmacist (or, now that I think of it, alchemist) the colorist actually combined and blended pigments plus all the other necessary ingredients right there in his laboratory in the rear of the salon. The only apparatus missing was one of those buzzy-sparkly things prominent in grade B horror films because, when he emerged with the mixture, he was wearing goggles, a vinyl apron, and holding the container of vile smelling brew in hands wearing elbow length, industrial strength, black rubber gloves! Workers were less protected at the Cherynobl cleanup!

Once my hair was toweled near-dry, the attendant (who, surprisingly, failed to wear a lead apron) took a 2-inch disposable paintbrush and began layering the gunk onto my wet tresses. Instantly, my scalp felt as if it had been inserted in a roaring campfire. "Is it supposed to hurt?", I asked. "Oh, it might tingle just a little." was the reply. Tingle indeed! Before she had completed the application, I was willing sign a confession for multiple crimes against humanity. Pain is not my friend.

Adding injury to insult, the next step was to position my head under a clear plastic dome while live steam circulated within it. This process, apparently having its roots in the Spanish Inquisition, helps the color impregnate itself into the hair. I learned that one must sit rigidly still under that cooker because the least movement brings one's forehead into contact with the metal tubing which conducts the steam into the helmet. More pain. Is this what women mean when they say you have to suffer to be beautiful?

Finally the steam cooker was done, the attendant returned and escorted me once again to the sink for a more temperate shampoo, and then back to the styling chair for highlights. It turned out to be a complicated and time-consuming process. Using the pointed tail of a comb, the beautician would separate a thin, one inch wide band of strands from the surrounding hair. Then a square of aluminum foil was laid down beneath the separated locks and another mysterious, foul smelling compound was brushed onto those selected hairs, after which the foil was folded over, trapping the hair and gunk inside. Repeat about forty times to make sure the highlights were evenly distributed throughout my coiffure-to-be, and I looked like an explosion in a gum wrapper factory. There was so much sundry metal wrapped around my cranium I could swear I was picking up Radio Moscow! This was followed by a 20 minute scalpsteaming under Torquemada's Tenderizer.



neck-breaking sink for my third shampoo and rinse treatment of the day, after which the colorist was asked to come over to inspect the result. I could tell from the raised eyebrow, the painful look on his face, and the little "tsk, tsk" sounds he made with his mouth that things weren't going well. "It's almost perfect," he lisped. Yeah? So why won't they let me have a mirror? "You'll love it," he purred soothingly, "It just needs a little finishing touch to bring out the natural verve in your beautiful tresses." What a schmoozer. Then he suggested, "A strawberry glaze."

Great, now I'm gonna get smeared with something from the dessert menu. The glaze stuff actually was (aside from the scalp massage during the shampoos) the most pleasant of the experiences. Very silky and soothing; my scalp liked it. Very aromatic; my nose liked it. Very tasty; at least two flies which had made their way into the salon loved it. For fifteen minutes they made passes at my noggin like Naval aviators practicing touch-and-goes on the U.S.S. Enterprise.

Once again a quick rinse and towel dry and now the final step - the blow dry and styling. Because this was not only my first salon adventure, but also my first attempt to do anything with my hair besides sweep it into a ponytail, I asked the stylist to explain in detail what she was doing each step of the way and why it was important, so I could repeat the process on my own. She did a fabulous job with the style but I doubt she'll ever be a candidate for a beauty academy faculty position. "You hold the brush like this," she would instruct (while working at the nape of my neck where no possible combination of mirrors afforded a decent view), "...because if you don't, the style won't come out right." Oh, now I understand.

At the end of a half-day in one of the most intriguing bastions of female prerogative in the known Universe, I emerged somewhat less encumbered with cash, too. Pay the cashier, tip the stylist, tip the colorist, tip the shampoo girl, tip the towel girl - the place had more hands out than a Clinton fund-raiser. Plus, I now owned a bagful of "must have" products - shampoo, conditioner, gloss, mousse, brushes - which had sufficient retail margin added make Neiman Marcus blush. Best of all, I had a brand new, first-in-a-lifetime, why-didn't-I-get-it-sooner, honest-to-goodness, my-own-hair-in-a-flattering-style coiffure.

I finally comprehend why women endure this madness. I felt on top of the world.

Now, when can I go back?
Lacey Leigh <lacey_leigh@geocities.com>

"NORMAL" IS JUST A WASH CYCLE.
HELEN DETROIT - WWW.GEOCITIES.COM/ILOVEMYCORSET

Finally, the timer buzzed - which resulted in a trip to the

Signed by the author!

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tendency to
express our true
selves. If this is a
problem, then
let's define it as

FITTING TIPS

Most female fashions are made for the female figure. Unless you're buying something custom made for you, anything off the rack in women's sizes will probably not fit a male body well. It's a matter of how the fat is distributed on a male and female.

What we recommend to our customers is to use our size charts posted on the shopping cart and order by the single largest size that matches your dimensions. ie: if your hip are your largest dimension, buy something where the hips match your measurements. Then have the rest of the garment taken in by a decent tailor or seamstress.

This is predicated upon you not being too shy to go in and have a garment tailored to fit you. Otherwise, settle for a so so fit.

Now, remember this is for something off the rack made for a female figure! If you can find someone that will custom make a garment to your measurements, you'll have something that fits as close to perfect as you're going to get.

Also, don't forget to take your measurements over the foundation garments you plan to wear under what you're planning on buying.

Lavendar & Sandy

Elegant Harlot Creations <http://www.elegantharlot.com>
Lavendar's Latex Lair <http://www.L8tex.com>

WIG DETANGLING

First examine your wig to be sure that it can be brought back to its new condition. Is it a good quality wig? Have you been using regular hair spray on it?

Soak the wig in a small amount of wig shampoo and cool water for at least several hours. If you've been using regular hair spray on your wig you may see a whitish colored substance in the hair of your wig. This is the remains of the hair spray you have been using. Soak, drain and soak again until no trace of the old spray remains.

Here you run into your first possible problem. Regular hair spray will ruin most low priced, (Paula Young, Eve Gabor, etc.) wigs. You may not be able to get all of the old spray off and in that case your wig may be beyond help. If you are able to get the old spray off, rinse in cool water to remove all traces of shampoo and let the wig dry. Do not wring or use any type of dryer on it. Once dry, place your hand inside and shake thoroughly.

Begin to detangle by using your fingers only. Run them through the tresses until no large tangles remain. This takes time and you must be patient. Be gentle and do not pull at tangles. Just slowly work them loose. Keep working at it until you can run your fingers through the hair without encountering any tangles.

Apply a leave in wig conditioner at this point. Now use a hair pic with coarse tines to complete the detangling process. After the wig is completely free of tangles, apply a spray-on wig luster product. Your wig should be ready now for styling.

Never, ever, use regular hair spray on a synthetic wig unless it is for an updo on a wig that will not be taken down afterwards or a wig that is nearing the end of its useful life anyway. Wig shampoo, conditioner, and hair spray are available at most wig shops or at a beauty supply shop near you, and are the only hair care products you should be using on your synthetic hair wigs.



The nicest people read us!

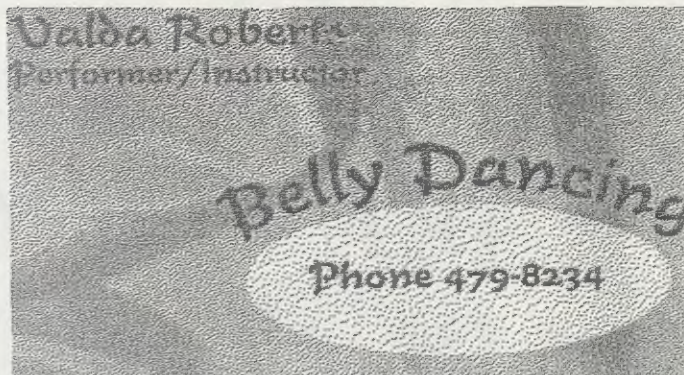
You may also want to save some time and frustration by simply taking your wig in to be cleaned and styled. Most wig shops will do this for you and the cost will usually be less than \$30.

Kathryn Hammond <salongirl42d@home.com>
The Dressing Room: www.msllisasdressingroom.com

REVIEWED

We've been recently clued in to the **Transformations** website, and it's truly heartening to see so much wonderful crossdressing-related services under one roof – there are the fashion products one would expect, lots of tips and tricks, photo galleries, links, and even some decent fiction. A worthwhile time to be had for all! <http://www.transformation.co.uk>

Then there's Calgary's Darkmall. At <http://www.darkmall.com> one will find much of interest to various special interests, including a link to our **Calgary chapter's** monster site. Webmistress Jodee has done an amazing job of compiling lots of good information and presenting it nicely. Go to <http://www.illusions.ab.ca>.



We've been receiving interesting printed matter as well. **Triple Echo**, an Ottawa quarterly publication, is a good-looking, informative and introspective look at transgendered issues past and present. E-mail sappers@cyberus.ca.

The CD newsletters from Vancouver and Winnipeg are full of life, and aptly convey their cities' characters. BC's **Cornbury News** (web them at www.cornbury.org) is all excited about the upcoming Esprit Gala. Eastwards, **Masquerade's Lipstick & Lace** is full of good cheer, support, photos, and some perspective. They can be reached at masquerade-mb@hotmail.com.

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FROM OUR MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Here are a couple of ideas that might help to make your Winterfest 2002 a very memorable one.

Some of the girls have already booked their appointment with **Yes Hair Studio**, 10045 102 St, 424 5973. Kelly and staff will provide the various esthetics a girl should have for the big night out. You could have your wig styled or your hair done. A make over, a manicure, a pedicure, waxing, you name it they will be glad to provide. Kelly is offering us a Winterfest Special of 20% off on hair styling and makeup. If you want to go the real femme treatment, pamper yourself and book ASAP with Kelly for Saturday or even Friday.

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The out-of-town grrlz for sure and even some local members have booked in at the host hotel, the **Comfort Inn**, 10425 100 Ave, 423 5611. With a room at the host hotel, you can play girl from start to finish. You'll be right where all the action is (nightclubs by night and salons and shopping by day). You'll get to mix with all the out-of-towners and of course you'll be in place for the Hospitality Suite Fri night and **Carole's Cafe** is a couple blocks away. And you won't have to drive afterwards. Mention to Leah, the lady at the desk, that you are with the **Illusions'** group. They've given us a special rate.

Go ahead, live it up grrlz. See you there.

-Dixie

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